

# **FAMILY ISSUES**

Handout

Introductory Letter

**Dear Participant,**

**Your successful participation in this class is one of the first steps in accepting responsibility for your role as a parent. You will be presented with a variety of new facts and information and are encouraged to ask questions and share your own experiences. Your input is as important as the material written for the class.**

**Challenge yourself to learn as much as you can. The future of your children is in your hands.**

**Sincerely,**

**The Curriculum Committee**

# FAMILY ISSUES

## Generalizations

1. Self-understanding is the basis of satisfying human interaction.
2. The rapid changes in society's mores place increased demands on the individual to be self-sufficient.
3. The degree of maturity and self-esteem of an individual affects the extent to which he or she assumes responsibility for personal behavior.
4. Unrealistic expectations of a person's capabilities can restrict an individual's growth.
5. Internal power is the ability to succeed when failure seems probable.
6. All people are unique in their drive and potential.
7. Love is learned through experience, modeling reinforcements, feelings about self, and cultural expectations.
8. Needs and desires vary among individuals and change throughout the life cycle.

*To do good things in the world you must first know  
who you are and what gives meaning in your life.  
Paula Brownlee*

# **FAMILY ISSUES**

## **Why am I afraid to tell you who I am?**

Who we are and who we become is determined by those who love us and by those who refuse to love us.

We need to love and be loved. But first we must know one another deeply. Instant love happens only in the imagination, not in real life. Lasting love requires self-revelation. Without openness, love is a charade.

Each person, at birth, possesses enormous potential for the fullness of life. We come to realize this potential largely through our interpersonal relationships. We are like the bud of a flower, we will open only if we are provided warmth and caring.

Our personalities, molded in infancy and childhood, can be changed to make us more contributing human beings. We need to develop an openness, an authenticity, to experience more than just superficial communication. We need to show our real self to others.

When we communicate with one another, we share. That means you can tell me who you are and I can tell you who I am.

Why am I afraid to tell you who I am? Because if I do tell you who I really am, you may not like me and that's all I have. In today's society, we put a lot of stress on being authentic. We do a lot of talking about the roles and masks we use to disguise our real selves.

There is no fixed true person inside of you or me. Why? Because being a person means that we are constantly changing. What we are as persons is what we think, feel, value, esteem, love, hate, fear, hope, believe in, and are committed to. These things are always changing for us. For example, one day we are fathers, the next we decide to be good dads through commitment and sacrifice for our children. Where we once had children, now we participate in their lives.

We are dynamic. What we are today may not be what we are tomorrow.

In life most people play games. But not all games are fun, especially when everyone is playing to win. Some games are patterned reactions to given situations. Society programs us to respond in certain ways. But if we make ourselves aware of these games, then we can choose to give them up.

## **Why am I afraid to tell you who I am? (Continued)**

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Games are little shields we carry in front of us. We use them to avoid self-realization. Games protect us from the hurt that can come from discovering the truth about ourselves and communicating it to others.

There are a lot of different games because there are a lot of different people. We are all unique and social relationships vary. But the one thing these games all have in common is that they are self defeating and destroy many possibilities for honest communication of self to others.

The stakes of these games are high. Successful game playing can cost the players the invigorating experience of true interpersonal encounters. It can prevent you from true individual growth and eliminate many worth while learning experiences.

# **FAMILY ISSUES**

Teacher lead classroom activity:

Where do we get our Self-esteem?

People value themselves to the same degree that they are valued by others. It is easier to feel good about yourself when you have good experiences. This activity demonstrates that idea. The following activity requires three student volunteers who have high self-esteem.

1. Ask for three student volunteers. Have the volunteers select one of the two cartoon strips accompanying this activity, and prepare a report to the class. They must agree to report on the same cartoon strip. Have the volunteers meet outside the classroom to plan their presentation and to wait until called.
2. Instruct the class to respond in three different ways to the presentations that will be made by the volunteer speakers. For the first presenter the class is to show total lack of interest. For the second presenter the class is to give reinforcement (e.g., head nodding, verbal agreement, or smiles). The third presenter is to be shown hostility, such as frowns and boos as he or she speaks. Each volunteer is to enter the classroom one at a time and make his or her report without the support of the other two volunteers.
3. On completion of the activity, do the following:
  - Have the volunteers tell how they felt about the response they received from the class.
  - Have the class members discuss any changes in the volunteers' behavior as they responded to the presentations.
  - Compare the relationship between behavior, response, and reinforcement.

Some of us do not like ourselves—or aspects of ourselves. It is possible to change. By targeting the things we want to change, we can adopt attitudes and behavior that will lead to change. By sticking with our resolve to change, the "real me" will step forward.

# FAMILY ISSUES

## Who Am I?

### Assignment

1. Write a letter to a great-grandchild whom you will not live to meet. In this letter, write about the following ideas:
  - a. The five most important things in my life.
  - b. Qualities I look for in a friend.
  - c. If my friends were to describe me, what I think they would say.
  - d. One thing I do very well.
  - e. A quality about myself I would like to change.
  - f. What I hope to achieve in life (examples: family, career, health, community, personal, and social goals).
2. List and explain two influences which may affect your self-image.
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
3. How would you respond to the situation presented below? What would you think? What would you say and do? Be brief; but write exactly how you would react.
  - a. While you are waiting in line to purchase theater tickets, a sour, unpleasant looking person with a cold, abrasive manner pushes in front of you. When you mention that this is indeed not the end of the line, the person responds rudely and aggressively to you.
  - b. Your sister or brother has borrowed your favorite T-shirt without asking permission. You are tired of this occurring. How would you communicate your feelings?

# **FAMILY ISSUES**

## **Who Am I?**

### **Self-evaluation Sheet**

1. List the things that give you a feeling of satisfaction or accomplishment?
2. How do you feel when you think about the things you do well?
3. List three of the things you would really like to accomplish.
- 3a. What would you have to do to accomplish these things?
4. How did you feel when you had to think of an accomplishment you would like to achieve or do?
5. List three of your favorite things to do.
6. What conclusions can you reach from your feelings about who you are?

# **FAMILY ISSUES**

## **Who Am I?**

### **Attitudes: Where Do They Come From?**

Some ways that people acquire their attitudes are the following:

1. We learn attitudes by looking and listening. Some children learn to like spinach after watching Popeye eat spinach and hearing about the strength it gives him.
2. We learn attitudes through reward and punishment. A child may learn not to talk socially after being told to be quiet in the presence of adults.
3. We learn by identifying with someone else. A person may adopt the beliefs or manner of dress and speech of a public person they admire.
4. We develop attitudes from within ourselves. As a result of the experiences we have in life, we begin to develop attitudes that reflect those experiences.
5. Sometimes we must change our attitudes because they conflict. We seek order in our life as the information we receive changes.

\*Write a one page essay on the ways that people acquire their attitudes.



# **FAMILY ISSUES**

## **Assignment**

### **Where Do Attitudes Come From?**

1. An attitude I developed from looking and listening is:
2. An attitude I developed by being rewarded is:
3. An attitude I developed by being punished is:
4. An attitude I have tried to teach someone else by rewarding or punishing is:
5. Think of someone whom you admire and consider to be a model to follow. In what ways do you wish to be like this person?
6. List three attitudes that you had as a child but DON'T have today.
7. What attitudes do you express to the world by your choice of clothing, the way you walk and talk, and the way you spend your free time?
8. Describe someone five to ten years older than you whom you have known several years. Have this person's attitudes toward life and the world changed? How?

# FAMILY ISSUES

## Handout

### CONSCIENCE

Conscience is that which sees that this act is or isn't consistent with my true self.

1. I must know:  
    myself,  
    my needs,  
    my limits,  
    what I have done,  
    what others think of me,  
    what I value,  
    and why I know when things are right or wrong.
2. I must know:  
    Who I can be or choose to be,  
    I am not just my fears,  
    I am not my needs,  
    I am not what others think of me,  
    I am not my institutions - church, family, job,  
    I am who I am.

To become an adult does not mean to become what you'd like to be.

Dissatisfaction = growth = conflict

Therefore, when I am dissatisfied with my life (myself), I am in emotional pain or turmoil, I grow emotionally or change.

This brings on conflict with the others in my life. They must now treat me differently, for I have changed. They may now experience Dissatisfaction = growth = conflict. So life is always changing.

# Family Issues

## Who Am I?

Assignment

**I SEE MYSELF AS...**

Mark 5 ways of relating, that best describe you.

_____ALWAYS RIGHT	This person rarely, if ever, loses an argument. They don't listen well and avoid other opinions like the plague.
_____ALL HEART	This person could be compensating subconsciously for sadistic or cruel tendencies.
_____BODY BEAUTIFUL	This person thrives on his physical vanity.
_____BRAGGART	This person childishly attempts to assert his imagined superiority.
_____COMPULSIVE CLOWN	This person often seeks out recognition and attention.
_____COMPETITOR	This person carries this idea to its extreme. He not only likes to compete but he also loves to win.
_____CONFORMIST	This person is seldom willing to risk rejection by others.
_____CRANK	This person cannot tolerate frustration.
_____CYNIC	This person sees the world through rose-colored glasses and believes the world should be tailored to his comfort.
_____ILLUSIONS OF GRANDEUR	This person has a puffed-up sense of personal importance. His lack of self-esteem is revealed through his name dropping and I-centered conversations.
_____DOMINATOR	This person likes to control.
_____DREAMER	This person achieves success and recognition in his make-believe world. Very often fantasy compensates for a lack of achievement in life.
_____PROBLEM DRINKER/ DRUG ADDICT	Tries to escape from reality. People most vulnerable to stress often seek out temporary refuge in drugs and alcohol.

_____ FLIRT	This person usually attempts to gain some kind of recognition for his ego.
_____ FRAGILE PERSON	This person sends out warning signals to others that he is delicate and must be handled with care.
_____ GOSSIP	This person plays for high stakes and personal ones at that. It's easier for the gossip to tear down others by words than to lift himself up by achievement.
_____ HEDONIST	This person seeks pleasure before all else. He is used to instant gratification and won't stand for any delays when he has an impulse to indulge himself.
_____ I-I-I	This person craves attention. His egocentricity is proportionate to the amount of pain he believes he has to deal with.
_____ INFERIOR & GUILTY	Both of these people have conflicts between what a person is and what he believes he should be. The inferior person recognizes his weaknesses and inadequacies. He provokes competition and is aggressive. The guilt-ridden person believes he should be punished for his failures and avoids competition.
_____ INDECISIVE	This person does not want to put his self-esteem on the line by making the wrong decision.
_____ INFLAMMABLE	This person has a short fuse and bad temper. They often let off steam for a grievance they can't openly discuss. Their anger rarely can be taken at face value.
_____ INTELLECT	It is easier for this person to read about rather things than to experience them first-hand.
_____ LONER	He shuts himself off from the rest of the world and tries to convince himself that he likes it that way.
_____ MARTYR	He feels abused. His persecution complex is characterized by numerous false and suspicious beliefs. He usually blames others for his unhappiness.
_____ MESSIAH	Fancy themselves as the saviors of the human race. Messiahs think of themselves as helpers and others as people to be helped.
_____ POOR-MOUTH	Talks himself down.
_____ POUTER	Can't sit down and openly discuss interpersonal problems because his position, or grievance usually is irrational and he secretly knows it.
_____ PREJUDICE	These people need some kind of vent for their emotional hostilities.
_____ PROCRASTINATOR	This person puts off the things that should be done immediately.
_____ RESENTFULLY YOURS	These people very often blame others for their own failures.
_____ SEX-BOMB	These people feel they have nothing else to offer but a provocative body.

_____PREDATORY MALE	Is usually an ego hunter looking for some new trophy.
_____SUFFERER	Have been so conditioned that they feel guilty for enjoying anything in life.
_____STRONG & SILENT	Prevents communication by saying very little. In this way, people think that he is profound.
_____WORDY	Talks so much that it is nearly impossible to sort out what he is saying.
_____WORRIER	Usually gets on a treadmill and goes over the same ground again and again, getting nowhere.

# Family Issues

Who Am I?

Assignment            **I am my culture.**

1.     Imagine waking up in your house. What is it like? Describe the sounds, smells, sights, and feelings you experience. Be very specific. Who is talking, what language do they speak, who is physically in the house. What are people doing? Is the radio or the television on? Is there food being prepared; if so, what kind?
2.     Pick someone in your class outside your particular culture or background. Discuss with that person your answers to question number one. How are their answers different or similar to yours?
3.     What have you learned from this exercise and how does it relate to who you are today?
4.     How does what you have learned from this exercise relate to who your children will be tomorrow?